

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05
CIAE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 L-01 SP-02 /045 W
-----082055Z 120744 /64

R 081930Z JUN 77
FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7788
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A SECTION 1 OF 2 L SAO PAULO 1494

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BR
SUBJ: AZORES LIBERATION FRONT (FLA) REPRESENTATIVES CALL AT
CONSULATE GENERAL

1. SUMMARY. ORLANDO CORDEIRO AND JOSE DIAS, PORTUGUESE CITIZENS
RESIDENT IN BRAZIL, ASKED TO SEE CONGEN OFFS ON MAY 18. CORDEIRO
AND DIAS SOUGHT US ASSISTANCE FOR FLA, SALLEGING THAT FAL
MIGHT SEEK SOVIET HELP SHOULD THE US NOT BE
FORTHCOMING. THEY ALLUDED TO BANK ACCOUNT THEY CLAIMED SOVIETS
OPENED IN BRUSSELS BANK ON BEHALF OF FLA. WHEN CORDEIRO AND DIAS
WERE REMINDED OF USG SUPPORT FOR GOP, THEY THREATENED TO CAUSE
INCIDENT TO COINCIDE WITH ARRIVAL OF NEW PRINCIPAL OFFICER AT
PONTA DELGADA. CONGEN JUDGES THAT CORDEIRO AND DIAS ARE CRANKS,
BUT WISHES TO ALERT ADDRESSEES FOR FURTHER EVALUATION.
END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 18, 1977, ORLANDO P. CORDEIRO AND JOSE DIAS,
PORTUGUESE CITIZENS, REQUESTED A MEETING WITH DONALD ROHLFING,
CONSULATE OFFICER, TO DISCUSS AZOREAN AND MADEIRAN INDEPENDENCE
FROM PORTUGAL. AS BACKGROUND, CORDEIRO MET BARBARA CARR,
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SECRETARY AT U.S. CONSULATE, SOME SIX MONTHS AGO DURING A BUS
TOUR OF WESTERN BRAZIL AND UPON LEARNING THAT SHE WORKED AT THE
CONSULATE ASKED TO SPEAK TO AN OFFICER WITHOUT EXPLAINING
WHAT THE SUBJECT MATTER WAS ABOUT. AN INITIAL MEETING WAS
HELD IN MARCH AT WHICH TIME CORDEIRO PROVIDED A VERY SKETCHY
OUTLINE OF AZOREAN HISTORY, HIS PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND THE
BACKGROUND OF THE FRENTE DE LIBERTACAO DOS AZORES (FLA).

DONALD ROHLFING LISTENED, BUT EXPLAINED THAT HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE AZORES MUCH LESS WHAT U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE AZORES AND THE FLA WAS. CORDEIRO LEFT AND ROHLFING THOUGHT THAT THIS WOULD BE THE END OF THE MATTER.

3. NEVERTHELESS, ON MAY 10, CORDEIRO CALLED AND ASKED TO MEET AGAIN WITH ROHLFING WHO RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY. BY COINCIDENCE, HOWEVER, THE CURRENT CONSULATE LABOR OFFICER, MR. JAMES MACK, HAD BEEN APPOINTED AS PRINCIPAL OFFICER IN THE AZORES. ROHLFING REQUESTED THAT MACK PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING. ON MAY 11, CORDEIRO ARRIVED TOGETHER WITH DIAS.

4. AFTER THE INTIAL PLEASANTRIES, MR. CORDEIRO SAID HE WAS ONE OF SEVERAL AZORIANS "REPRESENTING" THE FLA IN BRAZIL WHICH HE LATER ADMITTED WAS A VERY LOOSE ORGANIZATION HERE. ONE OF HIS OBJECTIVES WAS TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS AMONG HIGHLEVEL BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS TO PLEAD THE AZORIAN INDEPENDENCE CAUSE. HE MENTIONED THAT HE KNEW GENERAL GOLBERY, PRESIDENT GEISEL'S CHIEF OF CIVILIAN HOUSEHOLD AND PRINCIPAL ADVISOR, FROM GOLBERY'S FREQUENT STAYS AT THE EL DORADO HOTEL IN SAO PAULO A FEW YEARS BACK.

5. ANOTHER GOAL WAS TO DEVELOP MORAL AND FINANCIL SUPPORT FOR THE FLA AMONG THE 5,000 AZORIANS RESIDEING IN SAO PAULO. HE ADMITTED THAT THIS TASK WAS COMPLICATED BY THE GENERALLY LOW CULTURAL LEVEL AND STUNTED POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS COUNTRY-MEN HERE.

6. CORDEIRO SAID THAT THE SITUATION IN THE AZORES THEMSELVES, WAS TOTALLY DIFFERENT. THERE, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE POPULACE SUPPORTED THE FLA. HE WAS CONVINCED THAT

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THE ISLAND'S INDEPENDENCE FROM PORTUGAL WAS INEVITABLE.UNFORTUNATELY

THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT HAD REJECTED DIALOGUE WITH THE LEADERS OF THE FLA, LEAVING THE MOVEMENT NO OTHER RECOURSE BUT THE USE OF FORCE TO ACHIEVE ITS GOAL.

7. AS HE VIEWED THE SITUATION, THE FLA'S PRINCIPAL PROBLEM WAS NO LONGER POLITICAL, BUT FINANCIAL. FUNDS WERE NEEDED TO PURCHASE ARMS TO OVERTHROW THE PORTUGUESE RULE. CORDEIRO SAID THAT THE FLA WISHED TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S., THE COUNTRY TOWARD WHICH THE MOVEMENT WAS MOST SYMPATHETIC, ALTHOUGH NOT TO THE POINT OF WANTING TO JOIN THE U.S. AS SOME RECENT NEWS STORIES HAVE ALLEGED. CORDEIRO SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF ALIENATING ITS NATO ALLY, PORTUGAL, THE U.S. COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY OR OVERTLY IN SPITE OF WHAT HE ALLEGED WAS ITS TACIT PRO-INDEPENDENCE SYMPATHIES. CORDEIRO THEN SUGGESTED THAT HIS FLEDGLING FLA ORGANIZATION IN BRAZIL COULD RESOLVE THIS SUPPOSED US POLICY DILEMMA BY SERVING AS A DISCRETE CONDUIT THROUGH WHICH

U.S. FUNDS COULD BE PASSED TO THE FLA IN AZORES.

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8. IF THE U.S. WAS NOT RESPONSIVE TO THE FLA'S NEED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, HE SAID THE MOVEMENT MIGHT BE FORCED TO TURN ELSEWHERE, EVEN TO THE SOVIET UNION. TO EMPHASIZE THE POINT, HE CLAIMED THAT RECENTLY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT UNILATERALLY HAD OPENED AN ACCOUNT OF TEN MILLION DOLLARS IN A BRUSSELS BANK IN THE NAME OF THE FLA. FLA OFFICIALS WERE INFORMED THAT THEY COULD USE THIS "DONATION" AS THEY SAW FIT WITH NO QUESTIONS ASKED OR COMMITMENTS IMPLIED. HE SAID THAT SO FAR, THE FLA HAD CHOSEN NOT TO UTILIZE THE FUNDS BECAUSE OF THE MOVEMENT'S IDEOLOGICAL ABHORRENCE OF COMMUNISM AND SUSPICION OF SOVIET MOTIVES. HE WARNED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FLA MIGHT REASSESS IT'S POSITION, WERE SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. AND THE OTHER WESTERN DEMOCRACIES NOT FORTH-COMING.

9. IN RESPONSE, THE CONGEN OFF INFORMED CORDEIRO THAT THEY WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE AZORIAN SITUATION ONLY IN THE MOST GENERAL TERMS. THEY REMINDED HIM, HOWEVER, THAT THE U.S. PLACED GREAT VALUE ON ITS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT AND WOULD DO NOTHING THAT MIGHT PLACE THIS RELATIONSHIP IN JEOPARDY. THEY DREW HIS ATTENTION TO RECENT PRESS REPORTS ACCORDING TO WHICH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO INCREASED FINANCIAL AND
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MILITARY SUPPORT TO PORTUGAL.

10. ON DEPARTING, CORDEIRO TOLD MACK SEPARATELY, THAT UPON MACK'S ARRIVAL IN PONTO DELGADA IN AUGUST, THE FLA WOULD CAUSE AN INCIDENT SOMEWHERE IN THE ISLANDS (AND NOT DIRECTED AGAINST MACK) THAT WOULD REMIND HIM OF THIS CONVERSATION. MACK RESPONDED THAT NO SUCH REMINDER WAS NECESSARY.

11. COMMENT: BOTH CORDEIRO AND DIAS ARE APPARENTLY LONG-TIME RESIDENTS OF BRAZIL. WHILE THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY IN BRAZIL WOULD BE ONE NATURAL SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR FLA, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES WOULD ALLOW SUCH ACTIVITIES TO GO VERY FAR. CONGEN JUDGMENT IS THAT THEY ARE CRANKS BUT WISHES TO SUBMIT THIS MESSAGE FOR MORE COMPLETE EVALUATION BY ADDRESSEES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LOBBYING, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, INDEPENDENCE, LIBERATION FRONTS, AZORES, THREATS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 08-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SAOPA01494
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770204-0982
Format: TEL
From: SAO PAULO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770678/aaaacqcs.tel
Line Count: 187
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 567ea182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2227980
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AZORES LIBERATION FRONT (FLA) REPRESENTATIVES CALL AT CONSULATE GENERAL
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BR, US, PO, FLA-AZORES LIBERATION FRONT, (CORDEIRO, ORLANDO P), (DIAS, JOSE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/567ea182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009